

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed March 16, 2004 has been reviewed and carefully considered. Claims 1-19 are canceled. Claim 68 has been amended. Claims 72-75 are added. Claims 20-75 are pending in this application, with claims 20 and 68 being the only independent claims. Reconsideration of the above-identified application, as herein amended and in view of the following remarks, is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action mailed March 16, 2004, claims 20-67 are allowed.

Claim 68 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Japanese Patent No. JP 402281959 (JP '959).

Claims 69-71 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 as unpatentable over JP '959.

Before discussing the cited prior art and the Examiner's rejections of the claims in view of that art, a brief summary of the present invention is appropriate. The present invention relates to a method and apparatus for spreading a treating agent onto a moving web. Treating agents are applied to webs, or a surface that transfers the treating agent onto the web, for effecting the web properties. According to the invention, a treating agent is fed to a feeding chamber 3 and travels through a screen plate 4 to an intermediate case 5 (see page 5, lines 14-15 and lines 19-27). From the intermediate case 5, the treating agent is forced through nozzle openings 10 in a nozzle plate 6 (page 5, lines 36-37). As the treating agent is forced through the openings, jets of treating agent are formed and directed toward the surface to be treated (page 5, line 37 to page 6, line 5). The openings are arranged and dimensioned for applying the treating agent sufficient to form a film-like coating (page 6, lines 36-38). The thickness of the nozzle plate 6 can be 0.1 - 0.5 mm (page 6, lines 5-6).

Accordingly, the present invention discloses that a treating agent is supplied under pressure to a feed chamber and the feed pressure forces the treating agent through the plurality of nozzles onto a surface to be treated for covering the surface of the web to be treated.

Independent claim 68 recites a plate in an apparatus for spreading a treating agent onto a moving surface, the plate comprising a nozzle plate including openings for directing the treating agent from the feeding chamber onto the moving surface, wherein a periphery of each of the openings is defined entirely by the nozzle plate.

The English language abstract of JP '959 cited by the Examiner discloses a nozzle plate for an ink jet printhead which is used for directing individual droplets of ink from each nozzle onto a medium. Applicant has obtained the corresponding published Japanese application 02-281959 and a corresponding English language European patent application EP 0 389 738. These reference are submitted concurrently herewith in an information disclosure statement. Since JP '959 discloses a nozzle plate for nozzles of on ink jet printhead which inject droplets of ink onto a medium, JP '959 fails to disclose a plate in an apparatus for spreading a treating agent onto a moving surface as recited in independent claim 68. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that independent claim 68 is not anticipated by JP '959 under 35 U.S.C. §102.

Furthermore, since the nozzles disclosed by JP '959 are designed for injecting single droplets of ink to a medium, it is respectfully submitted that JP '959 also fails to teach or suggest the claimed nozzle plate in an apparatus for spreading a treating agent onto a moving surface. Accordingly, independent claim 68 is also allowable over JP '959 under 35 U.S.C. §103.

Dependent claims 69-75, being dependent on independent claim 5, are deemed allowable for the same reasons expressed above with respect to independent claim 5.

Support for new claims 72-75 is found in the specification as follows:

claim 72 - page 6, lines 5-6;

claim 73 - page 5, line 37 to page 6, line 5;

claim 74 - page 4, line 28; and

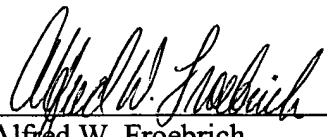
claim 75 - page 6, lines 31-34.

The application is now deemed to be in condition for allowance and notice to that effect is solicited.

A check in the amount \$72.00 is enclosed in payment for the addition of 4 new claims in excess of twenty.

Respectfully submitted,

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